

Address adopted by the Anti-Imperialist League.

FEBRUARY 10, 1899.

The full ratification of the Treaty with Spain will cause a technical change in the relations of the United States to the Philippine Islands, but will afford no reason for any change of the purposes of the Anti-Imperialists in regard to the future of the islands, nor will it in the least affect the clear duty of this Republic.

We are now engaged in warfare with the inhabitants of those islands. It is unprofitable to discuss the question as to which party began hostilities. No other result could have been expected, when the lines of two opposing military forces were held so close and in such tense condition that little was needed to cause an explosion.

Certain facts, however, are beyond dispute: that Aguinaldo was brought to the islands by our own warship, that his aid was accepted and desired in our military operations against the Spaniards, and that hopes of independence were encouraged by our consuls and other officers. It is equally indisputable that a parliament of the islands, organized by representatives elected by 186 towns and provinces, chose Aguinaldo President and framed a constitution, which was promulgated, defining the powers and duties of the separate departments of the government with remarkable clearness and ability; that the government so formed beyond a doubt represented fairly the people of the islands and probably with quite as much fairness as the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, in 1775, represented the people of the thirteen States.

It is also undeniable that on January 5 President McKinley issued a proclamation through General Otis, declaring that on the 10th of the previous month the Philippine Islands had been ceded to this country by Spain by the signature of the Treaty of Paris, and further ordered him to extend the military government of the United States "to the whole of the ceded territory," and to demand the surrender of Iloilo, which was then held by the Filipinos in an orderly manner by capture from the Spaniards.

It cannot be claimed in law that this assumption of power was warranted in advance of the ratification of the Treaty by both parties, and there can be no doubt that the arbitrary claim greatly aggravated the people of the islands, whose hope of independence seemed thus rudely destroyed.

No declaratory resolution as to the future of the islands was assented to by the Administration before the ratification of the Treaty by the Senate, and none has been made since.

Any right that we assert to ownership of the Philippines must rest, therefore, either upon conquest or upon purchase from their Spanish oppressors, or upon both, and in any case it is, as we believe, inconsistent with the principles of this Republic, and fraught with danger to its peace and to the peace of the world.

The first result we already witness, a war of subjugation, which must embitter the people we seek to rule, and which, however successful, must bring disaster and death to our soldiers, and unmeasured cost to our people.

Profoundly impressed with the seriousness of the situation, it is the purpose of the Anti-Imperialists to continue the circulation of literature, to assist in the formation of leagues, and by public meetings, and every proper means known to a free people, to agitate for the revival in the land of the spirit of Washington and Lincoln, to protest against a spirit of militarism and force, to oppose the colonial idea and a permanently large standing army, and to assert the vital truths of the Declaration of Independence embodied in the Constitution and indissolubly connected with the welfare of this Republic.

They urge, therefore, all lovers of freedom, without regard to party associations, to cooperate with them to the following ends:

First. That our government shall take immediate steps towards a suspension of hostilities in the Philippines and a conference with the Philippine leaders, with a view to preventing further bloodshed upon the basis of a recognition of their freedom and independence as soon as proper guarantees can be had of order and protection to property.

Second. That the Congress of the United States shall tender an official assurance to the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands that they will encourage and assist in the organization of such a government in the islands as the people thereof shall prefer, and that upon its organization in stable manner the United States, in accordance with its traditional and prescriptive policy in such cases, will recognize the independence of the Philippines and its equality among nations, and gradually withdraw all military and naval forces.

